

Message Text

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AMCONSUL ZANZIBAR

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT TZ

SUBJECT: PRELUDE TO ELECTIONS

REF: (A) DAR ES SALAAM 4420; (B) DAR ES SALAAM A-88, JUNE 20, 1975

1. SUMMARY: ON OCTOBER 26 TANZANIAN VOTERS WILL RE-ELECT PRESIDENT NYERERE FOR ANOTHER FIVE YEAR TERM, AND MAINLAND VOTERS WILL CHOOSE 96 MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT FROM AMONG 192 CAREFULLY VETTED TANU CANDIDATES. RE-ELECTION OF UNOPPOSED NYERERE IS A FORMALITY, WHILE TANU PARTY CONTROLS ON ELECTION SYSTEM AND COMPLETE EXCLUSION OF ISSUES FROM CAMPAIGNS MAKES PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS MORE AN EXERCISE IN POPULAR PARTICIPATION THAN IN DEMOCRATIC CHOICE. END SUMMARY.

2. ON OCTOBER 26 TANZANIAN VOTERS WILL GO TO THE POLLS TO RE-ELECT PRESIDENT NYERERE FOR A FIVE YEAR TERM AND, IN THE 96 MAINLAND CONSTITUENCIES, ELECT A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT.

3. THIS YEAR, 5,577,569 TANZANIANS ARE REGISTERED AS VOTERS;

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DESPITE A MASSIVE REGISTRATION CAMPAIGN THIS IS ONLY TEN PERCENT

HIGHER THAN IN 1970. 5,367,769 VOTERS ARE REGISTERED ON THE MAINLAND AND 209,800 IN ZANZIBAR.

4. IN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, VOTERS ARE ASKED TO VOTE YES OR NO TO THE

SINGLE CANDIDATE NOMINATED BY A JOINT SESSION OF THE TANU AND AFRO-SHIRAZI PARTIES LAST MONTH (REF. A). THE ONLY QUESTION IS WHETHER NYERERE WILL GET MORE THAN THE 95.4 PERCENT OF THE VOTES CASE HE RECEIVED IN 1965, OR THE 96.7 PERCENT HE RECEIVED IN 1970.

5. PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN THE 96 MAINLAND CONSTITUENCIES (REDUCED FROM 120 IN THE PREVIOUS ELECTION; REF. B) FOLLOW SAME BASIC PROCEDURES AS IN 1965 AND 1970, BUT POSSIBILITY OF VOTERS MAKING MEANINGFUL CHOICE HAS BEEN REDUCED FROM ITS ALREADY LOW LEVEL. AS BEFORE, CANDIDATES (BY DEFINITION, TANU MEMBERS) WERE VOTED ON BY DISTRICT CONVENTIONS OF PARTY NOTABLES, AND FROM RESULTING LIST NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF TANU NAMED THE TWO BETWEEN WHOM THE VOTERS WILL CHOOSE ON OCTOBER 26. (IN FOUR OF THE CONSTITUENCIES THERE IS ONLY ONE CANDIDATE.) NORMALLY, BUT IN BY NO MEANS ALL CASES, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE NAMED THE TWO TOP RUNNERS IN THE "PRIMARY".

6. THIS YEAR THERE WAS ONE POSSIBLY IMPORTANT GAW WRINKLE. IN EACH CONSTITUENCY EACH CANDIDATE IS ALLOCATED A SYMBOL (A "HOE" OR A "HOUSE") WHICH APPEARS ON THE BALLOT WITH HIS NAME TO ENABLE ILLITERATE VOTERS TO EXPRESS THEIR CHOICE. IN THE PAST TWO ELECTIONS, THESE SYMBOLS WERE ALLOCATED AT RANDOM, THOUGH ELECTION RESULTS SHOWED THAT, NATION-WIDE, CANDIDATES ALLOTTED THE "HOE" DID BETTER THAN THOSE WITH THE "HOUSE", FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL REASONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ANALYZED AT LENGTH BY TANZANIAN POLITICAL SCIENTISTS. THUS, IN 1965, 60 "HOE" CANDIDATES WERE ELECTED TO ONLY 41 "HOUSE" CANDIDATES; WHILE IN 1970, 72 "HOE" CANDIDATES WERE CHOSEN AGAINST ONLY 44 "HOUSE" CANDIDATES. THIS YEAR THE "HOE" WAS ALLOTTED, IN THE GREAT MAJORITY OF CASES (71 OUT OF 91), TO THE CANDIDATE WHO LED IN THE DISTRICT "PRIMARY". (MOREOVER, CABINET MINISTERS RUNNING FOR ELECTION WERE FOR THE FIRST TIME ALL ASSIGNED THE "HOE".) THIS HAS CAUSED SOME GRUMBLING, AND SPECULATION THAT THE TANU LEADERSHIP IS TRYING TO SIGNAL ITS PREFERENCES TO THE VOTERS.

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7. THE ONLY ELECTIONEERING ALLOWED IS JOINT MEETINGS ADDRESSED BY BOTH CANDIDATES, ACCORDING TO A SCHEDULE AGREED ON BETWEEN THEM. OTHERS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO CAMPAIGN ON THEIR BEHALF, AND THERE IS NO REJIO, POSTER, OR OTHER PUBLICITY ON BEHALF OF PARTICULAR CANDIDATES. CANDIDATES MAY NOT BRIBE OR "TREAT" THE VOTERS, APPEAL TO TRIBAL, ACIAL, OR RELIGIOUS SYMPATHIES, NOR MAKE EXTRAVAGANT PROMISES OF WHAT THEY WILL DO IF ELECTED. THIS YEAR,

FOR THE FIRST TIME, A SINGLE ELECTION MANIFESTO, OUTLINING TANU POLICIES AND PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, WAS ISSUED AS THE BASIS FOR ALL CAMPAIGNING. GOVERNMENT HAS STATED THAT ANY CANDIDATE WITH A "PLATFORM" OF HIS OWN IS TO BE CONSIDERED AS ANTI-TANU. CANDIDATES ARE EXPECTED TO CAMPAIGN ONLY ON THEIR ABILITY TO PROPOUND AND CARRY OUT THIS MANIFESTO, AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE TO THEIR DISTRICT. "THE ACT OF ELECTING A PARLIAMENT." SAYS THIS MANIFESTO, "MERELY IMPLIES THE CHOOSING OF SUITABLE PERSONS WHO ARE DISTINCTLY CAPABLE AND COMMITTED AND WHO CAN BE RELIED UPON TO BE IN THE FOREFRONT IN IMPLEMENTING THE ACCEPTED POLICY OF OUR PARTIES -- TANU AND AFRO-SHIRAZI."

8. GIVEN THESE CONSTRAINTS, IT IS HARD TO SEE ON WHAT BASIS, OTHER THAN RECOMMENDATIONS OF LEADERS OR CANDIDATES' PREVIOUS REPUTATIONS, VOTERS CAN MAKE SERIOUS CHOICE. IN ILALA DISTRICT IN DAR ES SALAAM, FOR EXAMPLE, WHICH HAS 87,188 REGISTERED VOTERS THIS YEAR, CANDIDATES HAVE SCHEDULED TOTAL OF 27 ELECTION MEETINGS, SO THAT FOR EACH VOTER TO BE REACHED ONLY ONCE, MEETINGS WOULD HAVE TO AVERAGE 3,600 VOTERS EACH.

9. NEVERTHELESS, TANU AND THE GOVERNMENT TAKES ELECTIONS VERY SERIOUSLY AND DEVOTES MUCH TIME AND ATTENTION TO THEIR SMOOTH OPERATION. TRADITIONAL AFRICAN GRAPEVINE MAKES UP IN PART FOR PAUCITY OF FORMAL COMMUNICATION, AND ELECTIONS HAVE IN PAST OFTEN PROVED SPIRITED AFFAIRS.

10. COMMENT: IF THERE IS ONE THING WHICH A TANZANIAN ELECTION IS NOT, IT IS A MEANS OF INITIATING OR CHANGING PARTY OR GOVERNMENT POLICY. ITS PRINCIPAL FUNCTION, AS A TANZANIAN POLITICAL SCIENTIST RECENTLY EXPRESSED IT, "IS TO GIVE AN AURA LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF LEGITIMACY TO THE AUTHORITIES, LOCAL AND CENTRAL, AND TO GIVE THE REGIME AN OPPORTUNITY TO ASSESS ITS OWN CAPABILITY TO MOBILIZE THE POPULACE FOR GREATER PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND IN IMPLEMENTING NEW GOALS OF THE STATE." IN TANZANIA, AT LEAST IN THE PAST, THE MAINTENANCE OF A TWO CANDIDATE SYSTEM, HOWEVER CONTROLLED, HAS ALSO GIVEN THE VOTERS AN OPPORTUNITY -- WHICH THEY HAVE FREQUENTLY EXERCISED -- TO KICK OUT AN INCUMBENT WHOM THEY DISLIKE EITHER PERSONALLY OR AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF POLICIES THEY OPPOSE. THE POLICIES THEMSELVES DO NOT APPEAR TO CHANGE AS A RESULT.
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